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Serving God and Mammon

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Serving God and Mammon. Wage formation and career mobility among protestant clergy in the Friesland area, 1580-1795.

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Contribution to symposium *Wage Formation in Early-Modern Labour Markets* – London School of Economics, September 16, 2016

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses the salary composition of reformed clergy in the early-modern Friesland area and aims to highlight causes and effects of intra-regional income differentials. The research problem of ministers' incomes in the Dutch Republic is studied before, but the traditional historiography bases its view predominantly on the situation in Holland. So do for instance De Vries and Van der Woude in their estimates of clerical and administrative salaries in their study of the Republic as 'the first modern economy' (1997, p 710), Van Rooden in his paper on the professionalizing process of ministers between 1625 and 1874 (1997) and Van Deursen in his book on the church and its believers in the 17th century (1974, revised edition 2010; p.89-93). Translating these estimates to a peripheral region like the Friesland area suggests unrealistic homogeneity in the labour market for ministers in this period. The salary structure was more complicated in the predominantly agrarian region of Friesland, bringing about a different dynamic on the labour market.

Historiography about ministers' salaries and their concurrent social statuses, usually differentiates between urban and rural environments, claiming preachers in the former enjoyed a higher salary and –hence- more societal prestige (Van Lieburg 1998; p. 99). As far as salary is concerned, this dominant view does not hold for the region under investigation in the current paper. Both the tax registers from 1749 (Nieuwland & Van Dalfsen 1988) and an attempt by the national reformed church to map the ministers' incomes in 1806 (*Opgave* 1806; NL-HaNA 2.07.01.01-89) reveal income and capital differences between ministers that cannot be explained by the urban-rural dichotomy alone. Therefore the current paper revolves around the question to salary composition in different parts of Friesland, and is furthermore interested in the career mobility of ministers in Friesland. The latter element is inspired by Van Rooden (1997) who proposes a relation between –among others- income and the number of parishes served by ministers. If the arrangements were indeed different in Friesland, can we see the hypothesized effects in career movements?

2. Background, sources, methods

The dataset used here, was composed by Jacobus Teitsma Joha, who died in 2014. He collected a wide range of demographic and social information about some 500 preachers in the Friesland area between 1700 and 1800, including occupations of parents, grandparents, parents in law, uncles and children, allowing social mobility approach (Knigge 2015). In addition, career information is included, notably the parishes served, the duration of the service, but also educational background and geographical origin. The original datasets only hint at income information, mainly derived from a report by the national church from 1806 (*Opgave* 1806), a time of *national* nation-building under French occupation (Wielenga 2015).

This paper explores additional sources of income composition of reformed clergy. Firstly, the census records of 1749, the so-called *Quotisatiekohieren* (Nieuwland & Van Dalfsen 1988). It was used before to measure migration in Friesland by McCants (1992).

The census records were drafted in 1749 to study an alternative way of taxing the population dependent on family size and wealth. Therefore, an estimate of the capital of all taxpayers was collected in all regions of the Friesland area. This is a valuable source, but at times difficult to interpret because the capital estimates have an element of subjectivity in them. Capital differences are not the same as income differences, because they clearly include accumulated possession from the past. Some of the data suggest that estimates were rather rough, most notably for the current paper are the capital positions of ministers in the regional capital Leeuwarden, all placed on a par at 9000 guilders. Did these eight men really have identical capital possession, even though their family composition was very different?

In his dissertation on the judicial arrangements of the church lands Van Apeldoorn (1915; p.478) listed parishes in need of state compensation in 1764. So this list gives an overview of parishes unable to provide a salary of 500 guilders out of the church lands. More on these arrangements will follow in paragraph 5. Fragmented evidence is found in the minutes of the church boards, published in a source edition by Cuperus (1916).

3. Traditional view of ministers' incomes

Ministers' incomes have been studied before, but the historiography appears to leave some questions open. One issue is that research often made its case by example, instead of systematic research across the board. This led to beautiful anecdotes, suggesting a profession with high cultural but low economic capital potential (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). But the value of the history of the Frisian minister Matthias Crassius, for whom his regional colleagues in 1587 collected two *stuivers* each to buy new shoes (Bergsma 1999; p.217) for our understanding of ministers' incomes and living standards, remains unclear. Secondly, the more systematic studies of the subject focus predominantly on sources from Holland, thereby neglecting the heterogeneity of the Dutch republic (Prak & Van Zanden 2013).

Van Deursen (2010) is an example of the first issue raised above. He used attractive examples to make a statement about clergy incomes. He addressed the tension between societal prestige of ministers, that caused occasional uproar when a minister left a congregation (p. 86), and their mediocre income position. The states of Holland guaranteed minimum salaries for ministers in villages -350 gld-, larger rural congregations -400 gld- and urban centres -450 gld-. COMPARED TO DE V & VDW Additional payments of 50 gld were available for ministers with 3 or more children under the age of 14 and ministers serving combined congregation of two or more churches. Sources in Holland suggest that these income criteria were properly adhered to. The salary level made it necessary for many to search additional income sources and perform part-time activities, such as teaching, medical care, crop farming or –the disputed practice of- trading (Van Deursen 2010; p. 92).

Van Rooden (1997) used the working of the labour market for ministers to claim a professionalizing process took place towards the end of the 18th century. The position of ministers changed in his view, from a religious function characterized by a calling, to a distinct profession with rights and duties. The tension between these two interpretations of the job is a constant in international historiography to the present-day clergy labour market (e.g. Bonifield & Mills 1980; Bridges & Villemez 1991; Chang & Perl 1999). Van Rooden

used the mobility of ministers as one of the indicators of professionalization. While until the last quarter of the 18th century mobility was considered low –ministers typically served 1 congregation, a minority served 2 in their life-time-, from about 1770 onwards the average parishes served increased to 3 (p.49). Van Rooden's explanation was more cultural than it was economic, even though in his introduction he stated that 'the income structure of the Dutch church was ideal for a large mobility' (p.61). After all, at the end of the 18th century the income position of Dutch ministers ranged from 500 guilders in an eastern village to 2,200 in the city of Amsterdam. It led him to the conclusion that moving up, from village to city, could be very profitable. But he did not include income differentials and their development over time as a variable in his argument.

De Vries & Van der Woude (1997) finally, included clergy income in their index of service sector professionals (1540-1815), that furthermore included schoolmasters, civil servants and millers employed by the water boards. All of the data used for this index referred to agents in Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht. As far as the clergy was concerned, they referred exclusively to larger and smaller urban environments. Their exercise showed a trend of the nominal incomes that effectively did not increase until about 1600, harming purchasing power, and a sharp increase to repair for this in the 17th century. Nominal income stabilized from the middle of that century, again diminishing the real value to some extent (p.710-712). With regard to the actual level of clergy income De Vries & Van der Woude presented source material from 16 towns in Holland, in 1742 (p. 662). Of 174 ministers and catholic priests an average year income of 1,979 guilders was calculated from tax registers.

4. The geographical setting: Friesland

The Friesland area was by no means a homogenous region in both economic, demographic and social terms. A persistent division of characteristics existed between the clay area in the west and the sand soil in the east. The economic and demographic center of gravity was located in the clay area bordering the Zuiderzee. This was one of the most densely populated regions in Europe in medieval times, and around 1500 still two-thirds of the Frisian population lived in these lands (Boersma 1970). A common subdivision of the region has been proposed by Faber (1973) who distinguished four areas: the north-western Kleibouwstreek, the western Kleiweidestreek, the south-western Veenweidestreek and the eastern Wouden (see map 1b, retrieved from McCants 1992).

Maps 1a and 1b. The location of the Friesland area in the Netherlands; Subdivision of Friesland in four land-use regions, following Faber (1973)

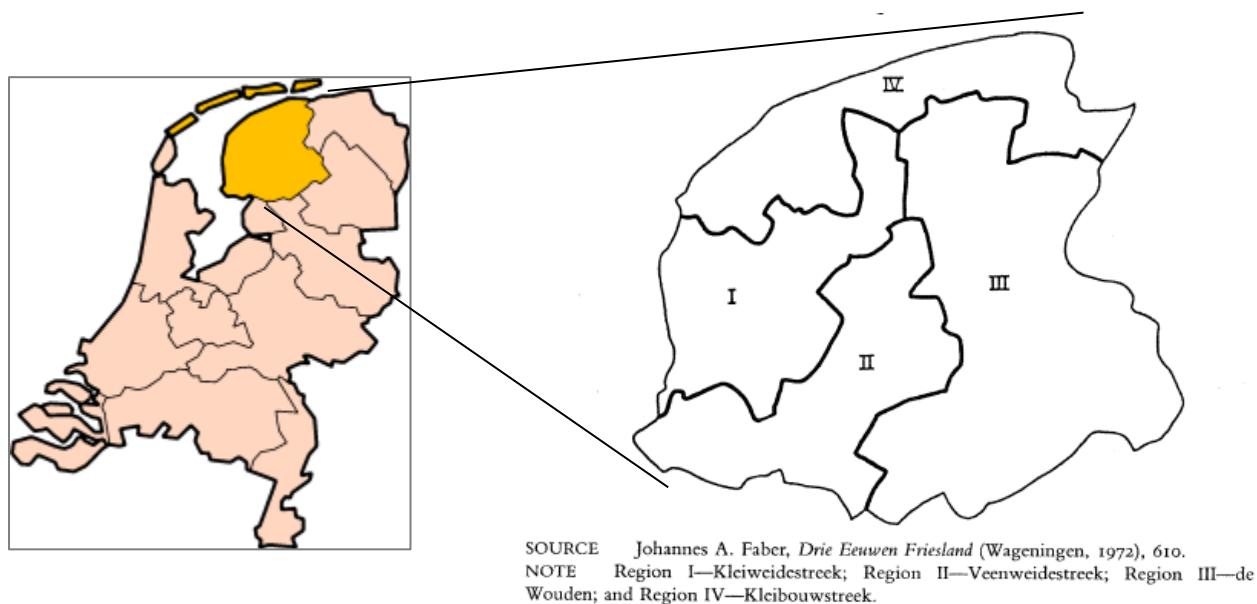


Table 1 shows the population density of the distinguished areas, showing a regional variation on the national division between coastal and landed areas (Prak & Van Zanden 2013). Both the economic and demographic focus was on the clay areas (Areas I and IV of map 1b), while the sanded soil (Area III) was less densely populated and less prosperous. Area II took a position in between.

Table 1. Population density measured in persons per km² in the distinguished areas of Friesland, 1511; 1714; 1744; 1796.

	1511		1714		1744		1796	
	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
	+		+		+		+	
	Urban		Urban		Urban		Urban	
I Kleiweide (Clay-meadow)	45	33	72	36	68	36	79	40
II Veenweide (Peat)	20	18	34	24	35	26	40	32
III Wouden (Sand)	-	11	-	20	-	24	-	29
IV Kleibouw (Clay)	36	33	62	41	65	44	75	54

Source: Frieswijk et al. 1998, p. 41.

The clay areas housed an average of 40 persons per square kilometer, while on sand soil the population density was 11 per square kilometer. All the Frisian cities were located in the clay area. This distinction between clay and sand persisted, even though the differences

shrank over time. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the population of Friesland doubled and the share of city dwellers rose from 23 to 33 per cent.

The coastal areas of Friesland belonged to the more prosperous regions of the Dutch Republic, together with the other sea provinces Holland, Zeeland and Groningen. Friesland had the second highest tax revenues of the Republic, albeit with a very substantial distance to the revenues of Holland. The export of agricultural products, such as cheese and meat, but also of manufacturing goods such as bricks, chalk and luxury goods such as silverwork, was a very lucrative business (Frieswijk et al. 1998). This led to an increase of non-agricultural specializations in the course of the 17th century –manufacturing, trade, shipping– in cities and the growing industrial villages –*Vlekken*–, such as Heerenveen and Drachten among several others. Together this trend of population growth and concentration in urban and non-agrarian centers accounted for a shift of the demographic center of gravity from the rural clay areas to the cities and the Wouden (McCants 1992). It simultaneously brought about a shift in economic activities where the importance of industry and services (predominantly trade) increased (Frieswijk et al. 1998).

In Friesland the population growth stagnated from the last decades of the 17th century, partly as a result of the economic downturn, just as it did in the Dutch Republic as a whole (Lourens & Lucassen 1997). The size of the population decreased with about 15 per cent between 1660 and 1744 (Frieswijk et al. 1998). Rising prices in agriculture, advances in hygiene and improved nutrition as a result of the spread of the potato, turned this situation around after the middle of the 18th century. Birth rates increased, while at the same time mortality decreased (Frieswijk et al. 1998). McCants (1992) estimated mortality in urban and rural centers to be 32.1 against 25.9 per 1000 of the population respectively. Frieswijk et al. (1998, p.42) follow her in that, by stating that mortality in rural areas was ‘8 to 10 per mil lower.’ McCants estimates implied that in cities the natural increase of the population was negative, which was supplemented by internal rural-urban migration (cf. Schroor 1993 about Leeuwarden).

Finally, from 1585 onwards Friesland had its own center for higher learning, in the university of Franeker in the north-west. It eventually provided education in all five faculties, but the motivation to establish a university was to guarantee an influx of educated ministers. Around 1700 it was one of 12 institutions for higher education in the Republic, educating one in 40 eighteen-year olds or 2.5 per cent, leading to complaints about overproduction of the academically schooled (Frijhoff 1982, p.502). This percentage started to decrease for a combination of reasons throughout the 18th century and Franeker was hit especially hard. Towards the end of the 18th century student numbers plummeted, in 1795 only 8 students were left (Jensma 1985; Caljé 2011).

5. Salary composition of reformed ministers in Friesland (1580-1795)

For a good understanding of the wage formation of the Frisian clergy in this period, we must return to the reformation, in these lands taking place between 1580 and 1594. Before

that turnaround cloisters were important land owners. Mol (2001; p.153) estimated that on the eve of the reformation they held about 20 % of the arable lands, mostly acquired as gifts from land-owning elites. As a result of the turnaround the local –secular- executives gained management control of the lands formerly held by cloisters and catholic parishes (Mol 2001; p.158).

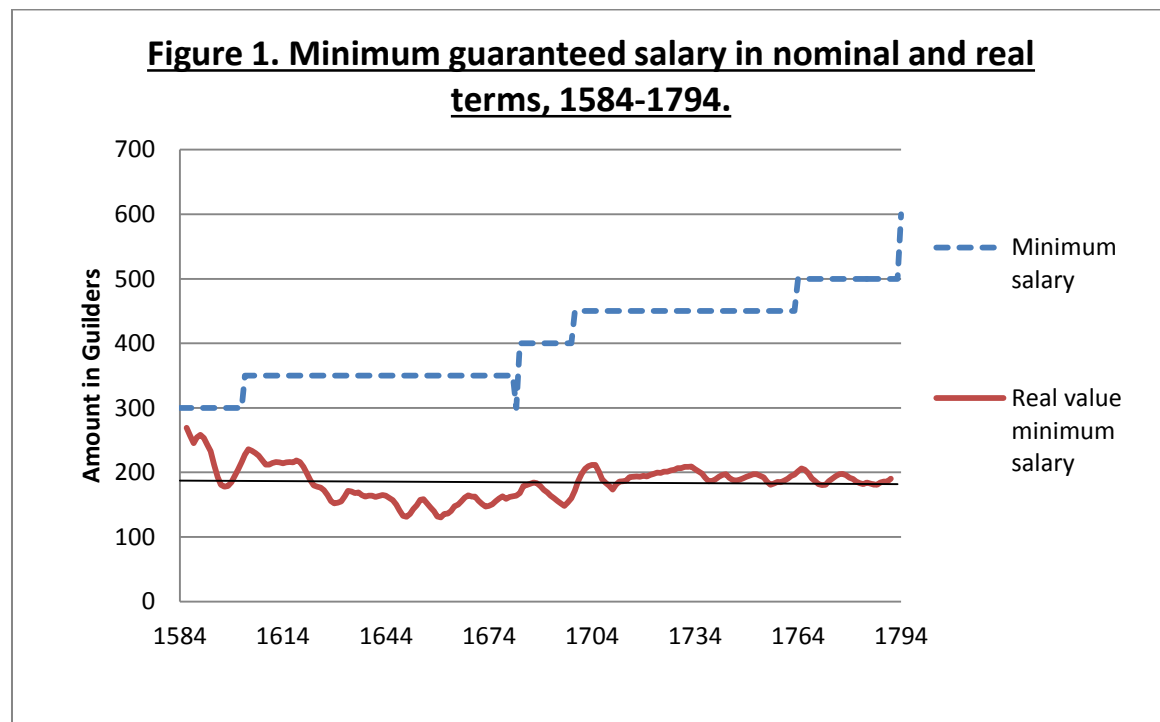
The arrangements concerning the management of the pastoralia lands raises questions about the relation between the church and the local and regional government. Bergsma (1999; p.187; my translation WJM) boldly stated that the church board had ‘absolutely nothing to say’ about the pastoralia and their revenues. The control over the lands guaranteed the secular officials strong influence in the church matters, a position the governing elites tried to maintain when it was challenged. That was the case when representatives of the young reformed church from all Dutch provinces met in Dordrecht in 1619 to discuss the church order. The so-called Dordrecht Synod formulated that secular officials must abandon the right to approbate ministers and hand it over to the church boards, but the regional government of Friesland, the *States*, did not accept that particular paragraph (*Tegenwoordige staat* IV 1789). The approbation right remained with the regents, instead of the church board. Bergsma (1999; p.186) therefore concludes that the church was under state supervision.

The church lands, the so-called *pastoralia*, were subsequently used for ‘pious purposes’ (Van Apeldoorn 1915). In 1587 the revenues in the city of Sneek were used to cover the incomes of the two reformed ministers, the headmaster and preceptor of the Latin school, the schoolmaster, the verger, the chantor, the organist, and furthermore the maintenance of the vicarage and the school, and finally the wine (Bergsma 1999; p.222). No wonder the revenues regularly fell short, and ministers’ incomes came under pressure. In the minutes of the Frisian Synod –the regional governing body of the church- we found many complaints of ministers in different periods who claimed to receive too little income (Source edition by Cuperus 1916). One solution to these suboptimal earnings was the combination of 2 –or even more- smaller parishes. The pastoralia of a small village could be insufficient for a decent salary, but a combination of the revenues of 2 sets of church-lands could very well provide enough income. Such combinations were officially approved by the states (Van Apeldoorn 1915). In the report *The current state of Friesland* from 1789 it read, in a footnote accompanying a table presenting the dispersion of ministers over the region: ‘Some of these ministers serve only one parish or church, others two or more; whatever suffices for a satisfactory subsistence of the ministers.’ (*Tegenwoordige staat*, p.412; my translation WJM).

When even a combination of parishes did not suffice, the *states* guaranteed a fixed minimum income for clergy members and supplemented the income from the pastoralia to this fixed level. We saw earlier that this was common practice in Holland as well (Van Deursen 2010). Figure 1 shows the quantitative development of the income minimum, both in nominal and in real terms. In contemporary debates about clergy incomes it was suggested that improvement was necessary because of a lack of influx of new recruits (e.g. Minutes Classis Franeker 1778). For the Frisian labour market this link is weak. The supplement increases of 1683 and 1699 came in times of oversupply of theological candidates (Van Rooden 1997).

Moreover, minimum income for Frisian ministers exceeded the income guaranteed in the neighbouring region of Groningen (Duinkerken 1991).

Rather, it seems the minimum supplement income was adjusted to price level instead of increased in terms of purchasing power in order to draw a new generation of ministers. On the contrary, even though the trend of the real value of the supplement over the entire period is flat¹, the purchasing power of the minimum salary was lower in 1794 than it was two hundred years earlier.



Source: Faber (1973), purchasing power calculated using www.iisg.nl/hpw. The real value is presented in a 5-year moving average to even the line out a bit.

For ministers of 'supplemented parishes' the income composition was straight-forward, even though the minimum income of 450 guilders compared negatively with the average income of ministers and priests in the Holland cities in 1742, as reported by De Vries & Van der Woude and discussed earlier. But the price level in Holland was higher (PROPORTION?) and they state that the reported income is supposedly supplemented by other earnings than the clergy salary alone (p. 663).

For ministers above the minimum level the earnings were higher, but also more flexible. Their salaries were retrieved from the revenues of church lands, which varied from year to year. Moreover the productivity of the soil affected the revenues, and hence the awarded salary. Not only were the salaries unequally divided over the Friesland area, they depended on agricultural conjuncture too (Cuperus 1916). During the aftermath of the cattle pestilence

¹ Trendline $y = -0,0248x + 187,31$; $r^2 = 0.003$.

of 1744 or times of economic hardship causing land rents to drop, the revenues of the land decreased and ministers' salaries came under pressure and were occasionally diminished temporarily. This conjunctural flexibility of clergy income is absent in historiography, that bases itself on base years rather than longer periods of time. It makes the claims based on anecdotal evidence all the more vulnerable. The church board minutes give an insight in hardship that ministers went through in times of economic downturn, such as the decade 1670, characterized by political unrest, and economic and demographic slowdown (Prak & Van Zanden; p.152). In Friesland the economic setback was notable in the decreasing lease prices of land, up to as much of 40 per cent of the lease collected in 1650 (Faber 1973; p.574). But even so, tenants defaulted on their obligations and revenues available for clergy salaries fell back sharply. Ministers complained to the church board that they were unable to pay for the increased taxes (Cuperus 1916). The States furthermore suspended the completion of salaries under 350 guilders –see the downward trough in figure 1 for the year 1678–.

The ministers hit especially hard were those serving rural parishes on sanded soil. Salaries in this areas, based on church land revenues, were fundamentally lower than those in clay areas. In urban environments, in Friesland the cities of Leeuwarden, Sneek and Harlingen, together with a number of smaller cities, clergy income was on average higher. Below, an attempt is made to investigate income and capital differentials in the distinguished types of soil. I focused here on the sanded area in the south-east, the clay soil in the north and the cities, mainly located in the western and northern parts. The source for the data presented here is the census estimate from 1749, introduced earlier. The census gave a tax assessment for all taxable inhabitants, which can be used to deduct a rough capital position. Nieuwland (1980; part I p.131) gives a table to make this translation, taking into account family size and taxing components –some of which were progressive and others flat-. Table 2 gives descriptive statistics of clergy capital positions in rural clay and sand parishes, and cities.

Table 2. Capital estimates of ministers in Clay, Sand and Urban areas, from census 1749.

	Average capital estimate	Standard deviation	Median	N
Clay	7388	1129	4000	49
Sand	3380	746	2150	41
Urban	14373	2891	9000	26

Source: Nieuwland (1980).

These findings, based on tax assessments of 1749, are in line with propositions by Faber (1973) about geographical land lease differentials, and Van Lieburg (1997) about rural-urban dichotomies. After all, clergy earnings in cities were higher than in villages, and likewise were rural capital possessions in clay areas higher than on sanded soil.²

Interpreting these results though, we must take into consideration the standard deviation, also listed in the table, and the difference between capital and income. Capital is accumulated possession and depends among others on direct sources of income, but on expenditures too.

² Clay-Sand: p-value (t-test) = 0.004
Urban-Rural: p(t)= 0.003

It would therefore be advisable to use these capital estimates together with more direct estimates of income. This is available for 1806, but convincing series for earlier years are hard to find. Secondly, the standard deviation in table 2 shows the vast differences within these categories. The large range of the data series, is a reflection of the unusual high salaries that a number of villages could offer, and of the modest arrangements in smaller cities such as Hindeloopen and Stavoren in the south-west. An assessment of preachers' incomes from 1805-1806 (*Opgave* 1806) revealed that the highest incomes in fact were provided in Marrum and Nijkerk, a combined parish in the northern clay area. The local minister received an annual income of 1800 guilders in 1806, more than his urban colleagues in Leeuwarden and Franeker in the same year. Berlikum and Oostrum in the same area likewise paid salaries over 1300 guilders. The cities of Sneek and Leeuwarden paid an income of 1250 guilders per year. But the cities of Bolsward, IJlst, Franeker (900 guilders), Dokkum (800), Hindeloopen and Stavoren (700) paid considerably lower incomes and did not make the top-50 list of highest incomes. In fact, the income in Hindeloopen and Stavoren was barely above the minimum income the states guaranteed, which was 600 guilders annually. So where modest clergy income conditions in the smaller urban areas seemed counter to the proposed urban-rural dichotomy, incidental high-end incomes in poorer regions such as the south-eastern sand area, contradict a dichotomy between more and less productive soil. An example of a parish in the seemingly poorer sanded area is the village of Twijzel. Twijzel was part of one of the poorest Frisian communities, Achtkarspelen in De Wouden, but nonetheless was able to provide their preacher with 1300 guilders.

Clergy salaries can thus be distinguished in two types: a fixed income at a pre-established level and a flexible income paid from the revenues of the church lands. The flexibility of the latter had no relation with productivity whatsoever. These two types relate in a different manner to changes in the economic cycle, that is: the real value responds differently to economic boom and bust. In times of economic boom the fixed salary loses purchasing power, because income will stay the same, but prices of goods will increase. We have seen the loss of purchasing power for fixed incomes in figure 1, above. In the first half of the 17th century, prices of primary goods increased, while the guaranteed salary remained fixed at 350 guilders. Salaries derived from the farm lands respond in a different manner, however. Likewise, for them expenditures increased when prices rose, but so did their income because land lease prices increased too. De Vries & Van der Woude (2005; p.718) calculated the price of a basket of subsistence goods for the whole Republic, 1530-1800. The trend of the price development of this basket is quite similar to price information of agrarian goods –wheat, rye, butter- in Friesland in the same period (Faber 1973; p.571). As an indicator of the trend it seems not unfair to use the subsistence basket by De Vries & Van der Woude to estimate real value of income in Friesland alone. Comparing the trend of the subsistence basket prices with land lease prices in Friesland (Faber 1973; p.574) is the best possible way to approximate purchasing power of flexible clergy salaries in the 16th and 17th centuries. From about 1630 to 1672 land lease prices increased firmly, a trend that was accompanied by rising prices of primary goods. The 1670s were marked by both falling land lease and food prices, leaving purchasing power more or less the same. But while land lease stabilized after 1700, prices decreased from 1700-1730. This was hence a favourable period for ministers with fixed and those with flexible salaries. The purchasing power of these groups diverged

after 1750, when land leases recovered from a dip after the cattle plague of the 1740s and increased faster than the also rising food prices. In the second half of the 18th century the difference of the real value of the two types of clergy income increased, to the benefit of the holders of flexible, higher incomes.

6. Career mobility of ministers

Van Rooden (1997) suggests an increase in career mobility, as a result of a professionalizing process. Ministers perceive of their position as a distinct profession and therefore move from parish to parish more frequently. His argument draws upon professional journals facilitating mobility, changing perceptions among theological theorists and churchgoers, but not on income levels. In Friesland we found not only large income differences, but also two distinct income types diverging in purchasing power. Did this wage composition have consequences for career movements of ministers?

Table 2. Number of parishes served during career, 1680-1785

N parishes	1680-1699	1700-1719	1720-1739	1740-1759
1	10	2	3	4
2	2	10	10	5
3	6	5	5	7
4	3	2	1	2
5+	0	2	0	3
Average	2.1	2.6	2.2	2.8

Table 3. Average parishes served in rural and urban, clay and sand

Cohort	Clay	Sand	Rural	Urban
1680-1699	1.8	1.7	1.8	3.2
1700-1719	2.2	-	2.1	3.7
1720-1739	2.1	1.8	2.1	-
1740-1759	2.3	2.5	2.3	3.8

Earlier we saw that even though generally urban areas provided ministers with the highest salaries, some smaller rural parishes succeeded in presenting remarkably high salaries. A majority of these richer rural environments were located on the richer soil in the north. But poorer sanded municipalities were sometimes able to compete, as a result of land and real estate donations from the past. It seems therefore that both the urban-rural and the regional explanation have limited value because of notable exceptions. So when reverend Henricus Muntingh moved from the city Sloten to the village Marrum in 1797, an irrational move following urban-rural explanation, he actually almost doubled his annual income from 1000 to 1800 guilders. Reverend Jesaiah Hillenius made a similar move when he exchanged

Ilst for Drachten. These men breached with the expected career pattern of moving from a small rural parish, to a larger village and eventually maybe a city. It seems income was a pull-factor for preachers, because all preachers appointed in Marrum between 1700 and 1800 served the parish until their death, and stayed for long consecutive periods. Ergo: the image that preachers depended on a small number of urban centers to earn a high income is flawed. There was an alternative career pattern that led from rural to urban centers and vice versa, just like the cases of Muntingh and Hillenius suggest. Preachers have benefited from moving from parish to parish to obtain a higher salary. Throughout the eighteenth century ever more preachers exchanged parishes once or twice, or more often. The average number of parishes served was 2.4 over the course of the eighteenth century³, but it increased to 2.8 towards the end of the century⁴. This is consistent with the national situation as reported by Van Rooden (1996). At the same time, it would be wrong to interpret ministers servicing only one parish throughout their career as the losers. Only a rather constant-size group of about 15 per cent remained in a supplemented parish, on an established minimum income. But other stayers could very well settle for reasonable salaries above 700 guilders. Furthermore, geographically mobile preachers generally moved from less affluent parishes to areas where salaries were higher, and rarely the other way around.

Table 4. Direction of career changes

Cohort	Sand to clay	Clay to sand
1680-1699	6	0
1700-1719	5	1
1720-1739	4	2
1740-1759	7	1

7. Conclusions and discussion

Income differentials result of historical salary composition

³ Based on a sample of n=82.

⁴ n=21.

Two types of income (fixed and flexible) with different economic dynamic

Affects career mobility